



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEST NILE VIRUS CONTINUES TO SPREAD THROUGH COUNTY ***Eight More Dead Birds Test Positive for the Virus***

County Vector Control officials announced today that eight more dead birds have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV), bringing the total number of positive birds to 30 this year. The birds were found in Ramona (2), Oceanside (2), Lakeside, Poway, Fallbrook and Campo.

"Last year, 34 birds tested positive for the virus over the entire season. This year, we already have 30 positive birds and we still have several weeks left in the mosquito-breeding season," said Gary Erbeck, director of the Department of Environmental Health. "San Diego County residents need to recognize the increasing threat of West Nile virus and take personal protection measures."

Since WNV is spread through mosquito bites, people should use mosquito repellents containing either DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, especially when outside at dusk and dawn.

To prevent mosquitoes from breeding around the home, eliminate standing water sources, such as pools that have turned green with algae, birdbaths or ornamental ponds. If the water cannot be eliminated, mosquito-eating fish can be placed in pools and ponds to control mosquito breeding. The County provides the mosquito fish free at 14 locations countywide.

Residents are urged to report dead birds found throughout the County so the Vector Control Program can test them for West Nile virus. Residents should report dead crows, ravens, jays, hawks or owls if they meet the following criteria: they have been dead for less than 24 hours, do not have a foul odor, are not covered with ants or flies, are not stiff, and if their bodies are intact and have not been hit by a car, shot, or killed by animals.

To report dead birds, find out where you can get mosquito fish, file a complaint about mosquito breeding or get additional information about West Nile virus, visit the County's Web site at www.SDFightTheBite.com or call 1-888-551-INFO (4636).

Statewide this year, there have been six human deaths from West Nile virus and 300 people have been infected. In addition, 209 horses have tested positive for WNV, resulting in the deaths of 93 of the horses. A total of 1,502 dead birds have tested positive this year in the state. There have been no human illnesses or positive horses in San Diego County this year.

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